



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council

45 Fort Hill Road  
Groton, CT 06340-4394  
Town Clerk (860)441-6640  
Town Manager  
(860)441-6630

**Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Heather Sherman Bond, Kathryn M. Brown-Tracy, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, Paulann H. Sheets, and James L. Streeter**

**Tuesday, February 17, 2009**

**7:30 PM**

**Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1**

#### REGULAR MEETING

#### I. ROLL CALL

*The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. by Mayor Harry Watson.*

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bond, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt and Councilor Streeter

Members Absent: Councilor Sheets

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.*

#### II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

*The Salute to the Flag was led by Mr. Paul Bates.*

#### III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

##### 2008-0311 Proclamation Recognizing "Wear Red Day for Women"

**Read**

*The proclamation was read by Councilor Bond.*

##### 2009-0036 Proclamation Recognizing Benjamin J. Estep

**Read**

*The proclamation was read by Mayor Watson who also attended the Eagle Scout Ceremony.*

#### Recess for Pre-Budget Public Hearing

*Mayor Watson called a recess for the Public Hearing at 7:37 p.m.*

##### 2009-0019 FYE 2010 Budget

**Heard at Public Hearing**

*Jim Giblin, 29 Chesbro Avenue, is concerned that attempts will be made to trim the budget across the board, and spoke in support of the Police Department budget. He stated that in hard times crime tends to increase, and as a harbormaster he is interested in maintaining policemen and their boat to protect Groton's waterways and properties.*

*Julie Maisch, 60 Colony Road, spoke in support of the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, and noted that the requested support level has not changed. There are more attendees from Groton than any other area, and local 3rd and 4th graders are invited to attend a symphony rehearsal as well. In the spring a new music director/conductor will be chosen out of six candidates. Ms. Maisch concluded by thanking the Council for their consideration.*

*Claiborne VanZandt, 3 Front Street, is in favor of police protection and the patrolling of the Mystic River and other waterways in Groton. He agrees with Mr. Giblin that these are troubled times and asks that the present level of support be maintained.*

*Paul Bates, 47 Church Street, voiced his support for the Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works, and the Police Department. He noted that the iron fence on Spicer Avenue is deteriorating*

*and is in need of repair, as well as sidewalks and broken curbs throughout the Town.*

*There being no further comments, Mayor Watson closed the Public Hearing at 7:44 p.m.*

#### **IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

*John Scott, 674 Cow Hill Road, Mystic, cited tonight's agenda item appointing Susan Vincent to the Ledge Light Health District Board of Directors. He applied for this vacancy in August 2008. The application was forwarded to the Council in early October 2008 for consideration, and at that time there were no other candidates. Five months went by with no interview, no status update, and no real information whatsoever. Another candidate applied for the position, and Mr. Scott was interviewed last week. He wonders if a decision was made early-on that he was not a candidate, and believes that such a decision is not fair. Mr. Scott encouraged the Council to establish a referral procedure that would promote better transparency and timelines, and would adhere to professional and human resources style guidelines. He believes that he was not treated fairly during this process. Mr. Scott stated that if the Town wants quality people to volunteer, something has to change so that everyone is treated fairly.*

#### **V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

*Councilor O'Beirne stated that he thinks this was an unusual occurrence with unusual circumstances. The committee was looking for as many volunteers as possible before making a choice, but there are occasions where one person applies and an appointment is made. Councilor O'Beirne further stated that this vacancy on the Ledge Light Health District Board of Directors was on-again/off-again whether there would even be an opening to fill.*

#### **VI. CONSENT CALENDAR**

##### **a. Approval of Minutes**

###### **2009-0051 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)**

###### **RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of February 10, 2009 are hereby accepted and approved.

**This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.**

##### **b. Administrative Items**

###### **2009-0035 Special Trust Fund Contributions**

###### **RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS**

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

Lawrence and Memorial Alumni Association - \$50.00 - Library Miscellaneous  
Eugene and Dorothy Norton in memory of Doris Campbell - \$50.00 - Library Miscellaneous  
Harry Curry - \$50.00 - Social Services Discretionary  
St. Andrew Presbyterian Church - \$1,073.38 - Social Services Discretionary  
Various Donations - \$83.14 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program  
City of Groton Matching Funds - \$238.75 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

**This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.**

##### **c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List**

###### **2009-0031 Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Program Grant - Senior Center**

**This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.**

###### **2009-0040 Reauthorization of School Bonds**

**This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.**

###### **2009-0042 Groton Education Foundation Grant - Jabez Smith House**

- 2009-0043      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.  
**Reauthorization of School Bonds - Kolnaski Elementary School**
- 2009-0044      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.  
**Reauthorization of School Bonds - Northeast Academy Elementary School**
- 2009-0045      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.  
**Reappointment of James Sherrard to Planning Commission**
- 2009-0046      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.  
**Reappointment of Ann Sloan Rankin to Harbor Management Commission**
- 2009-0047      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.  
**Reappointment of Nancy Codeanne to Housing Authority**
- 2009-0048      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.  
**Reappointment of Andrew German to Jabez Smith House Committee**
- 2009-0049      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.  
**Reappointment of Michael Kindle to Fair Rent Commission**
- 2009-0050      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.  
**Appointment of Susan Vincent to Ledge Light Health District Board of Directors**
- 2009-0051      This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

**Passed The Consent Calendar**

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Bond, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar. The motion carried unanimously

**VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)**

**a. Town Councilors**

*Mayor Watson received emails on the pre-budget hearing and speeding on Pleasant Valley Road. He attended an Eagle Scout Ceremony for Benjamin J. Estep and a ceremony at the Catherine Kolnaski Magnet School where a beautiful portrait of Councilor Kolnaski was unveiled.*

*Councilor Bond has had many requests for the Council to be stringent with the budget.*

*Councilor Streeter received two emails requesting no increase to the budget.*

*Councilor Kolnaski attended the Board of Education Budget Hearing, two Board of Education budget workshops, the open house at the Senior Center's new location, the Joint Town Council/Board of Education/RTM Liaison Committee meeting, the Phase II Design Committee meeting, and the unveiling of her portrait at the Catherine Kolnaski Magnet School. She also met with Groton Long Point President Bob Congdon.*

*Councilor O'Beirne received emails regarding holding the line with the budget. He attended the Committee of Chairpersons meeting, the Board of Education Budget Hearing, and the Joint Town Council/Board of Education/RTM Liaison Committee meeting.*

*Councilor Schmidt received a memo requesting no increase to the budget and deferral of the vote on the Phase II School construction package until at least 2015. She attended the Thames Street Rehabilitation Committee meeting.*

*Councilor Monteiro received the same letter and emails as other councilors. She attended the unveiling of Councilor Kolnaski's portrait at the Catherine Kolnaski Magnet School, the Board of*

*Education Budget Hearing, and the Golf Advisory Board meeting.*

*Councilor Brown-Tracy received the same emails as other councilors.*

**b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting**

*The RTM meeting scheduled for February 18, 2009, has been cancelled.*

**c. Clerk of the Council**

*The Town Clerk received a letter from Dorothy Streeter of Ken's Tackle Shop, expressing her appreciation for having been a sporting license agent and noting her disappointment that, due to a decision of the Department of Environmental Protection, she will not be an agent in the future. A comparison of sporting licenses sold by the Town Clerk's Office in January 2008 and January 2009 shows a 50% increase.*

*Barbara Tarbox read a list of current vacancies on boards and commissions, requesting those who may be interested to contact the Town Clerk's Office for an application.*

**d. Town Manager**

*The Town Manager stated that there will be no need for Group I and Group II to meet next week. The consensus of the Council was to reschedule the Committee of the Whole meeting to 6:00 p.m. on February 24, 2009. Councilors were requested to fill in their availability on calendars distributed by the Town Manager so they can be used as a tool for scheduling upcoming meetings. The Town Manager stated that the Board of Education has scheduled a public information meeting on February 25, 2009, regarding parking at S. B. Butler School.*

**e. Town Attorney**

*No report.*

**VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Brown-Tracy**

*No meeting, no report.*

**b. Economic Development - Chairman Bond**

*No meeting, no report.*

**c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski**

*No meeting, no report.*

**d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Sheets**

*No meeting, no report.*

**e. Finance - Chairman Schmidt**

*Councilor Schmidt read the minutes of the meeting held on February 10, 2009, which are on file in the Town Clerk's Office.*

**f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman O'Beirne**

*Councilor O'Beirne read the minutes of the meeting held on February 10, 2009, which are on file in the Town Clerk's Office.*

**g. Public Safety - Chairman Streeter**

*No meeting, no report.*

**h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Monteiro**

*No meeting, no report.*

**i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson**

*A special meeting was held tonight to discuss compensation for the Town Manager and the Town Clerk. At the last Committee of the Whole meeting the bond authorizations that are on tonight's*

*agenda were discussed.*

**IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*None.*

**X. NEW BUSINESS**

**2009-0031 Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Program Grant - Senior Center**

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPLICATION FOR A FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION GRANT

WHEREAS, federal funds are available for the potential replacement of a Groton Senior Center van, under the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5310 Program, with applications to be submitted through the Connecticut Department of Transportation Office of Transit and Ridesharing, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger may submit the Application for Capital Assistance for Private Nonprofit Organizations and Local Public Bodies to Provide Transportation Services for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may execute all such other reports and certifications as may hereinafter be required as a condition of receiving such capital assistance grant.

**A motion was made by Councilor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2009-0042 Groton Education Foundation Grant - Jabez Smith House**

RESOLUTION APPROVING A GRANT FOR THE JABEZ SMITH HOUSE

WHEREAS, the Groton Education Foundation, Inc. supports unique ideas developed by teachers and other educators in Groton, and

WHEREAS, the Town-owned Jabez Smith House plans to present 18th and 19th century living history events for families in Groton including a weekend long civil war encampment in Spring 2009, and

WHEREAS, the curator of the Jabez Smith House applied for, and has been notified that the program is eligible for, a \$500 grant from the Groton Education Foundation, Inc., now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may accept the grant in the amount of \$500 from the Groton Education Foundation to support a civil war encampment living history program at the Jabez Smith House.

**A motion was made by Councilor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Streeter, that this matter be Adopted.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2009-0040 Reauthorization of School Bonds**

RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE APPROPRIATION FOR FITCH HIGH SCHOOL

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton (the "Town") approved Ordinance No. 260 at referendum on April 27, 2004, which appropriated \$45,000,000 and authorized borrowing in the same amount for renovations and additions to Fitch High School; and

WHEREAS, Section 8.4.5 of the Charter in effect at the time the Ordinance became effective

provided that any appropriation for construction or other permanent improvement which has not been completely expended at the end of five years from the date thereof shall thereupon lapse; and

WHEREAS, the Town Manager has reported that certain additional expenditures remain to be made on the project that cannot be expended by the end of five years from the effective date of the last appropriating ordinance and has recommended that said appropriation be extended by reappropriating that portion of the \$45,000,000 which has not been expended on the effective date of this resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Finance has certified that whatever portion of said appropriation is extended may be financed by grants and Town general obligation bonds previously approved; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the Town to continue the Town's renovations and additions to Fitch High School; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that any portion of said \$45,000,000 appropriation which has not been expended on the effective date of this resolution shall be extended and reappropriated, provided that the total amount expended as of the effective date of this resolution, pursuant to said appropriation under Ordinance No. 260, plus the portion which is reappropriated shall not exceed \$45,000,000.

**A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, that this matter be Adopted and referred under Rule 6.5.3 to the Representative Town Meeting.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2009-0043**

**Reauthorization of School Bonds - Kolnaski Elementary School**

**RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE APPROPRIATION FOR NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - SOUTHWEST**

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton (the "Town") approved Ordinance No. 258 at referendum on April 27, 2004, which appropriated \$26,100,000 and authorized borrowing in the same amount for construction of a new elementary school to be located in the southwestern part of Groton; and

WHEREAS, Section 8.4.5 of the Charter in effect at the time the Ordinance became effective provided that any appropriation for construction or other permanent improvement which has not been completely expended at the end of five years from the date thereof shall thereupon lapse; and

WHEREAS, the Town Manager has reported that certain additional expenditures remain to be made on the project that cannot be expended by the end of five years from the effective date of the last appropriating ordinance and has recommended that said appropriation be extended by reappropriating that portion of the \$26,100,000 which has not been expended on the effective date of this resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Finance has certified that whatever portion of said appropriation is extended may be financed by grants and Town general obligation bonds previously approved; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the Town to continue the Town's construction of a new elementary school to be located in the southwestern part of Groton, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that any portion of said \$26,100,000 appropriation which has not been expended on the effective date of this resolution shall be extended and reappropriated, provided that the total amount expended as of the effective date of this resolution, pursuant to said appropriation under Ordinance No. 258, plus the portion which is reappropriated shall not exceed \$26,100,000.

**A motion was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Bond, that this matter be Adopted and referred under Rule 6.5.3 to the Representative Town Meeting.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2009-0044 Reauthorization of School Bonds - Northeast Academy Elementary School**

RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE APPROPRIATION FOR DEMOLITION OF THE FORMER FREEMAN-HATHAWAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FACILITY AND CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ON THE SAME PROPERTY

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton (the "Town") approved Ordinance No. 259 at referendum on April 27, 2004, which appropriated \$20,800,000 and authorized borrowing in the same amount for demolition of the former Freeman-Hathaway Elementary School facility and construction of a new elementary school on the same property; and

WHEREAS, Section 8.4.5 of the Charter in effect at the time the Ordinance became effective provided that any appropriation for construction or other permanent improvement which has not been completely expended at the end of five years from the date thereof shall thereupon lapse; and

WHEREAS, the Town Manager has reported that certain additional expenditures remain to be made on the project that cannot be expended by the end of five years from the effective date of the last appropriating ordinance and has recommended that said appropriation be extended by reappropriating that portion of the \$20,800,000 which has not been expended on the effective date of this resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Finance has certified that whatever portion of said appropriation is extended may be financed by grants and Town general obligation bonds previously approved; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the Town to continue the Town's construction of a new elementary school on the former Freeman Hathaway School property, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that any portion of said \$20,800,000 appropriation which has not been expended on the effective date of this resolution shall be extended and reappropriated, provided that the total amount expended as of the effective date of this resolution, pursuant to said appropriation under Ordinance No. 259, plus the portion which is reappropriated shall not exceed \$20,800,000.

**A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Bond, that this matter be Adopted and referred under Rule 6.5.3 to the Representative Town Meeting.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

*A motion to approve Resolutions 2009-0045 Reappointment of James Sherrard to Planning Commission, 2009-0046 Reappointment of Ann Sloan Rankin to Harbor Management Commission, 2009-0047 Reappointment of Nancy Codeanne to Housing Authority, 2009-0048 Reappointment of Andrew German to Jabez Smith House Committee, and 2009-0049 Reappointment of Michael Kindle to Fair Rent Commission was made by Councilor O'Beirne, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski and so voted unanimously.*

**2009-0045 Reappointment of James Sherrard to Planning Commission**

RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING JAMES R. SHERRARD TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLVED, that James R. Sherrard, 66 Algonquin Drive, Mystic is hereby reappointed to the Planning Commission for a term expiring 12/31/13.

**A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2009-0046 Reappointment of Ann Sloan Rankin to Harbor Management Commission**

RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING ANN SLOAN RANKIN TO THE HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Management Commission for a term expiring 09/01/11.

**A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2009-0047 Reappointment of Nancy Codeanne to Housing Authority**

RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING NANCY CODEANNE TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLVED, that Nancy S. Codeanne, 97 Front Street, Noank, is reappointed as a member of the Housing Authority for a term ending 07/31/13.

**A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2009-0048 Reappointment of Andrew German to Jabez Smith House Committee**

RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING ANDREW GERMAN TO THE JABEZ SMITH HOUSE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED, that Andrew W. German, 42 West Mystic Avenue, Mystic, is hereby reappointed to the Jabez Smith House Committee for a term expiring 09/07/12.

**A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2009-0049 Reappointment of Michael Kindle to Fair Rent Commission**

RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING MICHAEL J. KINDLE TO THE FAIR RENT COMMISSION

RESOLVED, that Michael J. Kindle, 13 Knoll Drive, is hereby reappointed to the Fair Rent Commission for a term expiring 07/01/11.

**A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2009-0050 Appointment of Susan Vincent to Ledge Light Health District Board of Directors**

RESOLUTION APPOINTING SUSAN M. VINCENT TO THE LEDGE LIGHT HEALTH DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLVED, that Susan M. Vincent, 1 New London Road, Mystic, is appointed as a member of the Ledge Light Health District Board of Directors for a term ending 11/10/2010.

**A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Brown-Tracy, that this matter be Adopted.**

*Councilor Streeter stated that he will be voting against this resolution. This is not due to Ms. Vincent's qualifications, but he is uncomfortable with the appointment process.*

*Councilor Monteiro sympathizes with Mr. Scott and is reluctant, but as she was not on the Appointments Committee she will be voting in favor of this item.*

*Mayor Watson is in agreement with Councilor Monteiro.*

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Votes:** In Favor: 7 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Bond, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Schmidt  
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Streeter

**XI. OTHER BUSINESS**



*None.*

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion to adjourn at 8:18 p.m. was made by Councilor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Bond and so voted unanimously.*

*Attest:*

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk  
Clerk of the Council*

*Lori Watrous, Office Assistant*